ROUTE IN ENVELOPE

SAC, Atlanta (100-6520) 3/12/64

PERSONAL ATTENTION

Director, FBI (100-3-116)

JUNE

COMMUNIST PARTY, USA
NEGRO QUESTION
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN RACIAL MATTERS
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

1 - Mr. Baumgardner (Field Supervision)
1 - Mr. Rosack
1 - Mr. Phillips

Reference is made to Bureau "June" letter to your personal attention 3/9/64 which furnished certain observations relative to recent handling by your office of information being obtained through highly sensitive sources.

Another matter has come to the Bureau's attention relative to your office's handling of information from these highly sensitive sources which necessitates further evaluation of your office's administrative handling of captioned investigation.

By airtel 3/2/64 to the Bureau, copies to New York, your office submitted a letterhead memorandum (LHM) of same date under the title of "Communist Infiltration of Southern Christian Leadership Conference, IS - C." This was followed by another airtel to the Bureau, copies to New York, dated 3/2/64 which also enclosed an LHM of same date under the same Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) title. The latter airtel and LHM were submitted under cover of still another airtel dated 3/5/64, copies of which were also furnished to New York. The 3/5/64 airtel noted that it was serving as a cover for corrected copies of an airtel dated 3/2/64 and that previous copies of the original airtel and LHM should be destroyed. It also noted that your office had originally failed to designate copies for the New York and Bureau files on the SCLC but was making such designation by means of the revised airtel and LHM.

The Bureau received a fourth communication from your office, a radiogram dated 3/5/64, which instructed that

MAILED 4
MAR 13 1964
COMM-FBI

Tolson
Belmont
Mohr
Casper
Callahan
Conrad
DeLoach
Evans
Gale
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Tavel
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Tele. Room
Holmes

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Bureau "hold dissemination of LHM forwarded to the Bureau and New York by airtel dated 3/2/64." The radiogram explained that a conversation originally described as between Martin Luther King, Jr., and Harry Wachtel was actually between King and Clarence Jones.

Your office's handling of a discovered error in an LHM, as evidenced by the above-described communications, was somewhat less than desirable on two main points. A close examination of the original LHM and the revised version revealed that these five-page LHM's are exactly alike except for two to three lines in the first paragraph of page 1. Good judgment would have dictated that the most expedient and efficient manner for handling the correction necessary would have been to prepare a revised page 1 rather than a completely new LHM five pages in length. It would also have dictated the desirability for submitting only a very brief cover communication relative to the desired change and thus saved the preparation of almost all of your second airtel dated 3/2/64. Further, there was no necessity for submitting the airtel of 3/5/64 which served only as a cover for a revised 3/2/64 airtel. The fact that you desired to submit extra copies of the LHM for additional dissemination to Bureau and New York files on the SCLC could have been handled either by routing slip or merely left to the discretion of the Bureau and New York for their own reproduction and dissemination procedures. From the foregoing it is obvious that considerable needless clerical, stenographic, Agent and supervisory efforts were expended.

The second undesirable aspect of your office's handling of this matter involves that of timing. The Bureau does not definitely know when your office first discovered the error made in the original LHM. It may have been as early as 3/2/64, which is the date of the revised LHM, or as late as 3/5/64 when your office submitted the radiogram instructing that dissemination be held up. Whenever it was

that the error was found, your office should have taken the most expeditious means available (telephone) to advise the Bureau to hold up dissemination. You would thus be taking all possible action to prevent an embarrassing situation arising wherein the Bureau might be required to write corrective correspondence to outside agencies. For your information, it was only by a stroke of good fortune that the Bureau was able to prevent dissemination of the incorrect LHM after receipt of the radiogram.

The Bureau is also in receipt of your "June" letter of 3/5/64 forwarding a tape recording of the conversation between King and Jones referred to in the LHM's discussed above. Nowhere in this 3/5/64 communication is it stated as to why the recording is being furnished the Bureau, it being noted that your office does not normally submit to the Bureau recordings in this case. The Bureau can only assume that possibly you submitted the recording because of the error which had occurred in the original LHM. If that be the case, such reason should have been indicated in your letter of 3/5/64. If it was some other reason, same should have been stated.

You are instructed to advise the Bureau by return communication as to the reason why the recording was furnished to the Bureau and the disposition you desire made of the recording.

Relative to your request as to destruction of the original airtel and LHM, be advised that it is contrary to Bureau record-keeping procedures to destroy originals of any communications even though they contain errors. The usual procedure is to retain the originals with appropriate notations as to the errors.

Instant communication as well as the referred to Bureau letter of 3/9/64 would indicate the necessity for some reassessment relative to your office's handling of matters in captioned case, particularly those relating to information being obtained from highly sensitive sources.

Letter to Atlanta
RE: COMMUNIST PARTY, USA
NEGRO QUESTION
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN RACIAL MATTERS
100-3-116

Correspondence in this and related cases is extremely heavy. You should examine closely the matter of personnel allotment to captioned and related cases and take such steps as are necessary to insure that sufficient personnel are assigned to this case to, in turn, insure it is receiving the meticulous attention warranted. The conference had at the Seat of Government with personnel of your office in December, 1963, highlighted the importance which the Bureau has attached to captioned case. There has been no change. This is still one of the most important cases being handled by the Bureau in the security field. It is absolutely imperative that there be no letdown in the necessary time and attention being devoted to this matter.

The Bureau would be receptive to obtaining any observations or recommendations your office may have relative to the matters discussed herein.